



Alaska will test students in English and math in grades 3 through 10 in the spring, as it has done since 2005.

Under the new tests -- the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) -- students will take two tests instead of three, with fewer questions overall. Schools can give as few as 15 or 25 questions a day. Most students will spend four to five hours a year on the tests.

AMP also offers teachers free optional classroom tools to check whether students are on track while instruction is taking place.

The Alaska Measures of Progress are not pass/fail tests. Students' scores will place them in Level 1, 2, 3, or 4, from low to high. Level 3 represents meeting the standards. But Level 1 and Level 2 do not represent failure by students or teachers.

The Alaska Measures of Progress are not high-stakes tests. The only consequence for students who score low on an AMP test should be to receive support to improve their learning.

AMP test scores do not affect graduation, classroom grades, grade promotion, or college admissions.

Increasingly, Americans need more than a high school diploma to earn a living wage. Our students need a foundation of academic skills so that as adults they have the flexibility to compete in a shifting economy.

The Alaska Measures of Progress assess students in meeting this goal: ***Students are on the path to graduate with the English and math skills to succeed in the workplace, training, or education of their choice.***

Classroom tests and course grades from teachers are very valuable, but they don't supply the same information as standardized tests.

Only Alaska's standardized tests measure students' progress toward postsecondary readiness, and they do so in a fair way. Everyone is tested on the same topics, and everyone's test is scored in the same way. Progress can be tracked over the years.

Parents and teachers will receive AMP reports that break down their students' test scores into subcategories of skills. Parents also can see how their students compare with the average score of other students.

AMP school-wide results help inform parents who are considering a choice of schools.

No data about individual students is ever given to the federal government. No data is sold to companies.

Standardized tests do not measure everything that is valuable in a student's education. That is not their purpose. AMP scores are just one source of information to help parents and educators decide whether students need more support in English and math.

Other sources are homework, classroom and district assessments, and parents' and teachers' observations. Together, parents and teachers look at the whole student. Students cannot be reduced to a test score, yet tests have their place in assessing students' needs.

Alaska has eliminated six standardized tests: the high school graduation exam (three tests) and the TerraNova exam (three tests).



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